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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 007688

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Iraq Social Unrest in France
European Expansion - France and the EU
PARIS - Thursday, November 10, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Iraq
Social Unrest in France
European Expansion - France and the EU

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

The triple suicide bombings in Amman make the front pages of Le Figaro, Liberation and Le Parisien, despite the fact the information arrived late for editorial commentaries. Le Parisien reports that the UN Secretary General, who had planned to visit Jordan, has cancelled his trip and that the United States has offered its assistance to help track down the perpetrators.

The Dalai Lama's visit to Washington is presented in Le Figaro as a slight for China, "days before President Bush's trip to Beijing" and as Hu Jintao pursues his world-wind tour. The same article mentions the Religious Freedom Report and its condemnation of China and its treatment in the Himalayan province. Yesterday's Le Monde also noted the publication of the Report: "The report pins Belgium, France and Germany `for their restrictive legislation' concerning minority religious groups."

The tug of war between the White House and the CIA is "getting tougher" according to Le Figaro: "This is a common practice: attack the messenger in order to divert attention from the message. The investigations will address not the existence of `black sites' but the origin of the leak."

Iraq, the assassination of another of Saddam's lawyers and the allegations of the use of white phosphates by the U.S. army in Fallujah are covered, the latter extensively in a two-page report in France Soir which announces on its front page: "In Iraq, The WND Were American." (See Part C) Le Monde carries a report on the "awful environmental legacy of Saddam" and the "improving situation."

On the domestic front most reports indicate that violence has subsided in the Paris region after the implementation of curfews. Analyses abound on the strengthened Chirac-Villepin relationship and Sarkozy's loss of glitter. The editorial in Liberation suggests that "the exceptional measures brandished to fight social unrest could fan the raging fires. The measures give more power to a police which has rarely concentrated so much power as it is." Le Figaro's editorial criticizes France as a welfare state. (See Part C)

Correspondent Philippe Gelie writes an op-ed explaining "How America Has Dealt With Urban Violence." "The answer in the U.S. was: repressive measures, responsibility, rehabilitation. But the results had a price in terms of police errors and unwarranted searches." (See Part C)

Europe's decision to open its doors to the Balkans elicits a commentary from La Croix which sees "Europe as an element of appeasement for the Balkan populations and a way to keep them away from excessive nationalism." (See Part C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Iraq

"After Latest Assassination, Saddam Trial Suspended"
Adrien Jaulmes in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/10): "The latest assassination of one of Saddam Hussein's lawyers is re-enforcing the climate of fear that has prevailed since the beginning of the trial and this despite exceptional security measures taken around the `green zone.' Whatever the identity or the motives of the perpetrators, the death of these two lawyers is re-igniting the criticism about having chosen to try Saddam in Iraq. The prevailing insecurity makes each movement inside Baghdad a dangerous endeavor. Other such trials have taken place outside the countries where the crimes

were perpetrated. In this case the decision by the new Iraqi government was part of a desire to re-enforce its national image. But the counterpart may be that the trial will lose its credibility in a court threatened by retaliation."

"The Horrible Crimes of the U.S. Army"

Thomas de Rochechouart in right-of-center France Soir (11/10): "Weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq, but not necessarily where expected. According to Italian television, the U.S. Army used chemical weapons in Fallujah. The same weapons which the Bush administration said had become a threat in the hands of Saddam Hussein. While the assault on Fallujah and the casualties it caused have been extensively reported, much less is known about the weapons used by the U.S. Army in the assault. According to Maurizio Torrealta who has led the investigation, 'the wounds on the bodies could not have been made by conventional weapons.' While the U.S. has never made a commitment regarding the use of Napalm, the use of white phosphates is banned by the treaty on WMD signed by Washington. Donald Rumsfeld yesterday made a remark that could be construed as a semi-admission of guilt, when he said that 'white phosphate is a conventional weapon.' This could lead to a battle of experts. The pictures of Fallujah are showing us today the reality of a war waged to 'export democracy and civilization.'"

Social Unrest in France

"The Welfare State"

Nicolas Barre in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/10): "The French tax and social system tends to favor the upper and the lower classes, forgetting the middle ones: the state welfare system increases by 60 % the income of 20 % of the population. It would be hard to imagine a more 'social' system. In the U.S. polls show that 8 out of 10 Americans believe they can one day be part of the wealthiest 10 percent of the population! Hence their rejection of the French system. Could it be that too much redistribution of the nation's wealth is harming our economic activity? France must be the only country in the world to still be asking itself this question."

"The Dangers Lurking Behind a Return to Normalcy"

Guillaume Goubert in Catholic La Croix (11/10): "Paradoxically, there is great danger behind this return to normalcy. That of letting out a big sigh of relief, while we go back to our daily business and turn our backs to the needs of the suburbs. Everything can easily shift with the burning of a single car. The job at hand is a longwinded one. It will not end with the last car burning."

"How America Dealt With Urban Violence"

Philippe Gelie in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/10): "Repressive measures, responsibility and rehabilitation were the three R's that the U.S. implemented after the Los Angeles riots in answer to the worst confrontation it experienced on its territory since the Civil War. Many other cities have adopted the three R's, sometimes with excessive zeal. In New York, the deployment of more police brought crime down by 60 percent. but there was a price to pay: preventive arrests and searches targeting minorities, something new for the U.S."

European Expansion - France and the EU

"Europe and the Balkans"

Jean-Christophe Ploquin in Catholic La Croix (11/10): "Europe's logic of expansion continues despite the 'no' last spring from France and the Netherlands. After the opening of the negotiations with Turkey, it now appears that positive signs are being sent towards the Balkans. Yesterday, Macedonia received the green light from the European Commission and last Monday the EU-25 approved an agreement for negotiations with Bosnia-Herzegovina. This process is good for peace in Europe. The nations of former Yugoslavia are going through a delicate phase. Europe will be playing a major role in the future of the region. The prospect of EU membership is going to be an element of appeasement. It represents a pole towards prosperity, and respect for the right of law, something that will detract from those who are pushing for a return to nationalism."

"France Loses Ground in Brussels"

Jean Quatremer in left-of-center Liberation (11/10): "France's influence in Brussels continues to dwindle. Jose Manuel Barroso yesterday nominated to key trade and EU expansion positions a number of liberals who more often than not are either British or Irish. The battle behind the scene for these positions is particularly harsh. France has played its pawns and managed to save a key position in agriculture, which leaves most observers thoughtful because agriculture will progressively be less of a dominant portfolio." STAPLETON